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Arlington Arts&Culture Action Plan

This document is a preview of materials that will be presented for public feedback at the Tuesday, June 6th Arlington Arts and Culture Action Planning Public Event.

If you cannot attend the June 6th event, please email comments on the vision, principles, and action plan matrix by Friday, June 9, 2017. **Questions and comments can be sent to culturalplan@arlington.ma.us. Thank you!**

Introduction & Purpose

Arlington is a suburban hub of arts and culture with Revolutionary roots. Cultural shifts over the centuries, including immigration and historical events, have dynamically shaped its arts and culture. It's early cultural history combined with natural and recreational assets also link Arlington's heritage to other towns in the region. Cultural resources like the Battle Road Scenic Byway, the Minuteman Bikeway Rail Trail, the Old Schwamb Mill, and the Cyrus Dallin Museum are prominent examples of Arlington's arts and cultural heritage and history.

The town of Arlington embraces the importance of artists, cultural activities, arts-related businesses and cultural institutions to the town's vitality. As of 2017, Arlington benefits from a concentration of locally-owned businesses and organizations throughout town. Existing assets include curated public art; public libraries and museums; artisan shops and galleries; makerspaces and artist studios; local restaurants; and businesses bringing visual and performing arts that attracts audiences from the metropolitan Boston region and beyond. Recognizing the importance of arts, culture, and creativity to Arlington's vibrancy, Town Manager Adam Chapdelaine appointed commissioners to the Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC) in 2012. In 2016, the town and community leaders from ACAC joined forces to initiate a town-wide cultural plan.

The **Arlington Arts and Culture Action Plan** aims to strengthen and grow arts and cultural opportunities in Arlington, leading to a thriving arts and cultural life for all. Implementation of this plan will advance the historic and cultural resource area goals outlined in the Arlington Master Plan as well as the creative implementation of other civic priorities. It will also bolster management, coordination, and programming of the proposed Arlington Cultural District from East Arlington to Arlington Center.

Cultural Planning Overview

Cultural planning is a place-based planning process focused on strengthening and growing arts and cultural assets in ways that enhance civic and economic vitality and livability. Arts and cultural assets include people, places, and activities. Examples include: arts and cultural businesses providing arts and cultural services and supplies; organizations and institutions providing arts and cultural programming; temporary and permanent public art and cultural activities; markets; festivals; galleries and museums; cultural and historic buildings and sites; artist workspaces; arts manufacturing spaces; and more.

Cultural planning creates an opportunity for residents, workers, and visitors to reflect on the conditions that shape arts and culture in a defined geographic place and to think strategically about the policy and programmatic supports that are necessary to foster conditions that can help arts and culture grow and thrive. Individuals, businesses, and organizations located in the private, nonprofit, and public sectors that are producers, makers, and service providers of arts and cultural goods, resources, and experiences are generally referred to as the "creative sector" or the "arts and cultural sector." The contributions of these individual and organizational actors combined with the participation of the general public generate arts and cultural activities and interactions that dynamically shape the cultures of places. Cultural planning engages these diverse segments of the community to plan holistically for ways in which public and private partners can work together to nurture a vibrant arts and cultural life.

Vision Statement and Principles

The town of Arlington envisions strengthening and growing arts and cultural opportunities, leading to a thriving arts and cultural life for all. Through public and private partnerships, the town of is committed to cultivating conditions that strengthen the arts and cultural sector and expand opportunities for arts and

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cultural engagement and expression for Arlington residents, workers, and visitors from all walks of life. Core principles include:

- **Inclusion:** Advancing social equity and social cohesion through supporting arts and cultural experiences that reflect Arlington's changing community character and cultural diversity.
- **Innovation:** Stimulating innovative thinking, approaches, and solutions to challenging civic issues and improving civic infrastructure design by fostering collaborations with the arts and cultural sector.
- **Accountability:** Developing strong systems of accountability and fostering a culture of collaboration between the arts and cultural sector and other sectors to steward sustainable plan implementation.
- **Commitment:** Maintaining a core belief in arts and cultural opportunities and experiences as essential to the civic vitality and livability of Arlington and engaging partners in maintaining a commitment to plan implementation.

Public Process

To develop this action plan, the Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture (ACAC) engaged the professional services of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to lead the cultural planning process in consultation with an ad hoc Arlington Cultural Planning Working Group. The Working Group is composed of representatives from various boards, committees, commissions, and organizations in Arlington including ACAC, Arlington Public Art, the Arlington Cultural Council, the Board of Selectmen, and Arlington Center for the Arts. MAPC has worked closely with the Working Group to conduct extensive research and community engagement to assess the following:

- 1) the nature and quality of Arlington's existing arts and cultural assets,
- 2) the challenges facing Arlington's arts and cultural sector (which includes individual artists, businesses, and organizations, and others), and
- 3) the opportunities that exist for strengthening Arlington's arts and cultural life.

The draft action plan goals and strategies outlined in this document were developed using public feedback provided by over 900 Arlington residents and workers collected in three ways: a town-wide online survey, seven focus groups, and a public event on March 1, 2017. The final action plan will include a vision statement and principles, existing conditions section documenting Arlington's arts and cultural assets and needs, and a set of action plan goals, strategies, and implementation partners addressing the challenges and opportunities identified in ways that strengthen the arts and cultural sector, strengthen infrastructure for arts and culture, and expand fair access to opportunities for creative engagement and expression.

Action Plan Goals Overview

An overview and description of the six action plan goals is provided below. The Action Plan Matrix on the following pages proposes implementation strategies and partners that are needed to advance each goal.

GOAL #1: STRENGTHEN ARLINGTON'S INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

A thriving arts and cultural life is important to Arlington's character, identity, and civic life. The Town of Arlington will investigate and recommend public and private funding mechanisms and a staffing capacity and structure for appropriately resourcing the implementation of arts and culture action plan priorities.

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GOAL #2: IMPROVE POLICY CONDITIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO HELP THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR THRIVE

A vibrant arts and cultural sector is an important element of the town's community and economic development vision. The Town of Arlington will improve zoning policy and administrative procedures to remove barriers that may limit or prohibit the inclusion of temporary or permanent arts and cultural uses in Arlington in suitable locations.

GOAL #3: PURSUE INTERDISCIPLINARY PLANNING INITIATIVES THAT ENGAGE ARTS, CULTURE, AND CREATIVITY AS VITAL TO IMPLEMENTING THE MASTER PLAN VISION

Arts and culture is essential to fostering a vibrant and livable Arlington. The Town of Arlington will undertake planning initiatives that engage arts and culture as an essential element in realizing the Arlington Master Plan's vision of a healthy and thriving Arlington. Activities will include documenting arts and cultural assets, integrating arts and culture into planning processes and planned public infrastructure improvements, and engaging public art practices as a means for creative and inclusive placemaking.

GOAL #4: EXPAND PUBLIC ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT, PARTICIPATION, AND EXPRESSION

A vibrant cultural life in Arlington includes fair access to opportunities for creative/artistic development and exposure to and participation in diverse artistic and cultural experiences. The Town of Arlington will foster collaborations between local and regional public, private, and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, institutions, businesses, and others in order to improve the programmatic diversity of artistic and cultural offerings in Arlington.

GOAL #5: STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF ARLINGTON ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The viability and sustainability of anchor arts institutions in Arlington is important to improving the quality of artistic and cultural opportunities available to artists and non-artists alike. The Town of Arlington will identify opportunities to strengthen communication and strategic collaborations between organizations in ways that maximize resources and improve quality of programming and services for the arts community and for the general public.

GOAL #6: ELEVATE THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY OF ARLINGTON'S ARTS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Arlington is home to established professional artists and emerging artists at various stages of personal and professional artistic development. The Town of Arlington will facilitate communication and networking between Arlington artists in collaboration with arts and cultural institutions in order to improve dissemination of information pertaining to services and programming geared towards the creative community and facilitate creative collaborations and cross-pollination of artistic ideas.

Finally, we invite you to join us on Tuesday, June 6th at Arlington Town Hall so you can weigh in on the strategies and implementation partners needed to achieve our goals. We look forward to seeing you at the event!

Sincerely,

The Arlington Cultural Planning Working Group

Arlington Cultural Planning Working Group Members:

| <i>First Name</i> | <i>Last Name</i> | <i>Affiliations</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|---|
| Adria | Arch | Arlington Public Art |
| Sarah | Buyer | Arlington Center for the Arts |
| Ali | Carter | Department of Planning and Community Development |
| Barbara | Costa | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Joe | Curro | Board of Selectmen (Chair) |
| Carla | Dorato | Artful Heart Gallery; Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture; Arlington Merchants Association |
| Jonathan | Hyde | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Beth | Locke | Arlington Chamber of Commerce |
| Stephanie | Marlin-Curiel | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Andrea | Nicolay | Arlington Libraries |
| Stephen | Poltorzycki | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Jenny | Raitt | Department of Planning and Community Development, Town of Arlington |
| Linda | Shoemaker | Arlington Center for the Arts |
| Leland | Stein | The Regent Theatre; Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Aimee | Taberner | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |
| Lisbet | Taylor | Arlington Cultural Council (Chair) |
| Jeff | Timperi | Arlington Cultural Council |
| Marga | Varea | Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture |

Action Plan Matrix Implementation Partners - Abbreviations

A-TED – Arlington Tourism & Economic Development Committee
AA! – Arlington Alive!
ACA – Arlington Center for the Arts
ACAC – Arlington Commission on Arts and Culture
ACC – Arlington Cultural Council
APA – Arlington Public Art
APL – Arlington Public Libraries
APS – Arlington Public Schools
ARB – Arlington Redevelopment Board
BAC – Bicycle Advisory Committee
BRSB partners – Battle Road Scenic Byway partners
BOS – Board of Selectmen
CSMA – Capitol Square Merchants Association
CC – Conservation Commission
CoC – Chamber of Commerce
CDD – Cultural District Designation
CDMP - Cultural District Managing Partnership
CPC – Capital Planning Committee
CPAC – Community Preservation Act Committee
DPW – Department of Public Works
ED – Economic Development
Facilities
FC - Finance Committee
HC – Historical Commission
HCA - Housing Corporation of Arlington
HHS – Health & Human Services
HRC - Human Rights Commission
IT – Information Technology
MPAC– Master Plan Advisory Committee
MBAC – Minuteman Bikeway 25th Anniversary Committee (MBAC)
OSRC – Open Space and Recreation Committee
PCD – Dept. of Planning and Community Development
PIC – Public Information Officer
PS – Public Services
PRC – Park & Recreation Commission
RD – Recreation Department
SAC – Support Arlington Center
SAH – Support Arlington Heights
TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee
TM – Town Manager